

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

24. (Previously Amended) A glow plasma discharge apparatus for generating and maintaining a glow plasma discharge comprising:

a pair of electrodes having a space therebetween;

a perforated dielectric placed over one of the electrodes and partially occupying the space; and

a time varying electric field generated between the electrodes.

25. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the time varying electric field is generated by AC current.

26. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the time varying electric field is generated by pulsed DC current.

27. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the perforated dielectric comprises a plurality of apertures, each aperture having a diameter ranging from 5 to 200 μm .

28. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the dielectric is between 100 μ m and 2mm in thickness.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 28 wherein a second dielectric is placed over the other of the electrodes.

32. (Previously Amended) The apparatus of claim 28 wherein the dielectric is able to withstand high temperatures.

33. (Previously Amended) An apparatus for generating and maintaining a glow plasma discharge at atmospheric pressure comprising:

an electrode;

a time varying electric field applied to the electrode;

perforated dielectric means placed over the electrode; and

means for retaining the perforated dielectric on the electrode.

34. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the time varying electric field is generated by AC current.

35. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the time varying electric field is generated by pulsed DC current.

36. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein a perforated dielectric means comprises a plurality of apertures, each aperture having a diameter ranging from 5 to 200 μ m.

37. (Previously Added) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the perforated dielectric means is between 100 μ m and 2mm in thickness.

38. (Cancelled)

39. (Cancelled)

40. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~38~~ 33 further comprising a second perforated dielectric means placed over a second electrode.

41. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~38~~ 33 wherein the perforated dielectric means is able to withstand high temperatures.

42. (Previously Amended) A method of generating and maintaining a glow plasma discharge comprising the steps of:

positioning electrodes in a relation with a space therebetween;

providing within the space a perforated dielectric having a plurality of apertures of micron dimension; and

generating a time varying electric field between the electrodes.

43. (Previously Added) The method of claim 42 wherein the time varying electric field is generated by AC current.

44. (Previously Added) The method of claim 42 wherein the time varying electric field is generated by pulsed DC current.

45. (Previously Added) The method of claim 42 further comprising the step of providing a second perforated dielectric having a plurality of apertures of micron dimension within the space.

46. (Previously Added) The method of claim 42 wherein the step of positioning the perforated dielectric with the space further comprises placing the perforated dielectric on an electrode and retaining the dielectric thereon.

47. (Previously Added) The method of claim 46 wherein the step of retaining the dielectric on one of the electrodes further include the step of placing a retaining collar over the dielectric.

48. (Previously Added) The method of claim 42 wherein the step of positioning the perforated dielectric within the space comprises the step of depositing a dielectric on one of the electrodes.

49. (Previously Added) The method of claim 48 wherein the step of depositing a dielectric on one of the electrodes comprises vapor deposition.

50. (Previously Amended) A method of stabilizing glow-to-arc transition for a discharge plasma comprising the steps of:

providing a pair of electrodes;

positioning a dielectric having a plurality of current limiting micro-channel apertures therethrough for limiting current from increasing above glow-to-arc transition between the electrodes; and

applying a time varying electric field between the electrodes.

51. (Previously Added) The method of claim 50 wherein the time varying electric field is generated by AC current.

52. (Previously Added) The method of claim 50 wherein the time varying electric field is generated by pulsed DC current.

53. (Previously Added) The method of claim 50 further comprising the step of covering the other of the electrodes with a perforated dielectric having a plurality of current limiting micro-channel apertures so that both electrodes are covered.

54. (Previously Added) The method of claim 50 wherein the step of covering one of the electrodes comprises placing a dielectric material thereon and retaining the dielectric material thereon.

55. (Previously Added) The method of claim 54 wherein the state of retaining the dielectric material on one of the electrodes further includes the step of securing a retaining collar having an upper surface with a cylindrical aperture extending therethrough, and sidewalls depending therefrom, over the dielectric.

56. (Previously Added) The method of claim 50 wherein the step of covering one of the electrodes comprises the step of depositing a dielectric on one of the electrodes.

57. (Previously Added) The method of claim 56 wherein the step of depositing a dielectric on one of the electrodes comprises vapor deposition.

58. (Previously Amended) A method of generating and maintaining a glow plasma discharge at atmospheric pressure comprising the steps of:

positioning electrodes in a relation with a space therebetween;

providing within the space a perforated dielectric having a plurality of apertures of micron dimension; and

generating an electric field between electrodes.

59. (Previously Added) The method of claim 58 further comprising the step of providing a second perforated dielectric having a plurality of apertures of micron dimension within the space.

60. (Previously Added) The method of claim 58 wherein the step of positioning the perforated dielectric within the space comprises the step of depositing on one of the electrodes.

61. (Previously Added) The method of claim 60 wherein the step of depositing a dielectric on one of the electrodes comprises vapor deposition.

62. (Previously Added) The method of claim 24, wherein the electrodes are positioned in a facing relation.

63. (Previously Added) The method of claim 42, wherein the electrodes are positioned in a facing relation.

64. (Previously Added) The method of claim 50, wherein the electrodes are positioned in a facing relation.

65. (Previously Added) The method of claim 58, wherein the electrodes are positioned in a facing relation.